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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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COUNTRY Albania

## REPORT

**SUBJECT**            Effect of Stalin's Death

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## REFERENCES

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25X1

1. The death of Stalin caused a state of near panic among the leaders of the Albanian Government. Mehmet Shehu, Minister of Interior, has set up even more rigorous police measures which highlight the sense of insecurity among Albanian officials. Moreover, Shehu was able to place Enver Hoxha ( whose star has long since begun to pale) further into the background.<sup>1</sup>
2. Heretofore, the present Tirana Government had felt fairly secure in the thought that Albania held an important position in the Soviet Union's Mediterranean strategy. The military and naval construction projects undertaken at Vlone and the Island of Saseno were tangible evidence in the eyes of Albanian officials of Soviet interest in Albania.<sup>2</sup> Even when Bulgarian officers began to replace Soviet officers in the Albanian Army, Albanian officials continued to feel that the Soviet military authorities considered Albania as fulfilling a position of importance. The arrival of Bulgarian officers was interpreted as a joint Bulgarian-Soviet plan for the protective occupation of Albania in the event of hostilities.<sup>3</sup>
3. Stalin's death, however, leaves the Albanians suddenly aware of their isolated position. Haunted by Titoism, they realize that they do not possess the means for guaranteeing their common frontier with Yugoslavia, should the Soviet Union fail to support Albania. They also realize that they have a cold war within Albania itself even if an organized revolt never materializes.
4. Stalin's death, however, does not mean that Albania is going to fall into the laps of the Western Powers like a ripe fruit. Resistance activities in northern Albania are not properly coordinated. Moreover, General Petri Dume, Deputy Chief of the Albanian General Staff believes himself capable of controlling rebel bands. Nevertheless, there are some officials in Tirana who fear a Putsch by those Titoists whom Mehmet Shehu's police have not been able to identify.

25X1

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-2-

25X1

5. The present Albanian Government also puts some hope in the rivalries of their immediate neighbors. [redacted] demands in Southern Albania displease Belgrade. Tito's intentions toward Albanian territory and the share he would reserve for himself should the occasion arise, would certainly disturb [redacted] Adriatic powers. Hence, the Albanian Government hopes that the mutual suspicions and difficulties among the neighboring states will delay any threat to the Hoxha Regime.

25X1

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